Drought situation in the country

148. SHRI SHYAMAL CHAKRABORTY:
SHRI MOINUL HASSAN:

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) the names of the States facing drought situation;

(b) whether the Ministry earlier undermined the gravity of drought situation in the country;

(c) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(d) the steps Government has taken so far to face the challenge?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (PROF. K.V. THOMAS) : (a) During South-West Monsoon 2009 the following 12 States have declared drought/drought like conditions/scarcity in the entire State or some districts of the State:

1) Andhra Pradesh

2) Assam

3) Bihar

4) Himachal Pradesh

5) Jharkhand

6) Karnataka

7) Madhya Pradesh

8) Maharashtra

9) Manipur

10) Nagaland

11) Rajasthan

12) Uttar Pradesh

(b) and (c) The Government was constantly monitoring the situation with the India Meteorological Department and the State Governments and undertook such steps as required to mitigate the crisis.

(d) The steps taken so far to face the challenge are given in the enclosed statement [Refer to the Statement appended to the Answer to USQ 133] Part (a)

Future of agriculture

149. SHRI SHYAMAL CHAKRABORTY:
SHRI MOINUL HASSAN:

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government is aware that the future of agriculture in our country is bleak since it has become non-profitable for our agriculturists with the escalation of cost of irrigation, fertilizer and seeds on the one hand and the absence of remunerative prices for the produce on the other; and

(b) if so, the reaction of Government thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (PROF. K.V. THOMAS): (a) and (b) The Government of India is implementing the National Policy for Farmers, 2007 witn an objective to improve economic viability of farming by substantially increasing the net income of the farmers and to ensure that agriculture progress is measured by advances made in this income. The policy provisions, *inter alia*, include supply of good quality seeds and disease-free; planting material, issue of soil health passbooks to the farmers to facilitate application of integrated pest management and integrated nutrient management system. Another measure is the announcements of Minimum Support Prices (MSP). The Government's price policy for agricultural commodities seeks to ensure remunerative prices to the growers for their produce with a view to encourage higher investment and production. The Government decides on the support price for various agricultural commodities taking into account the recommendations of the Commission for Agricultural Costs and Prices (CACP). The CACP while recommending the MSP for various agricultural crops takes into account the cost of all kinds of inputs at their prevailing rates which also included seeds, fertilizers and irrigation charges etc. Substantial increase in the MSP of major cereals ranging from 49% to 78% was provided during the last 5 years. MSPs of pulses & oilseeds were enhanced by up to 83% during the same period.

Loss of fertility of agriculture land

†150. SHRI PRAKASH JAVADEKAR: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that according to State of Environment Report-2009 by Government, most of the fertile land in the country is losing its fertility continuously due to increasing use of fertilizers and pesticides;

(b) if so, the steps taken by Government for land conservation;

(c) whether the fertilizers and pesticides used for agriculture in the country are not of good quality;

(d) if so, the measures taken by Government to improve the quality of fertilizers; and

(e) if not, the reasons for the loss of fertile land?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (PROF. K.V. THOMAS): (a) The State of Environment Report 2009 has identified several factors for land degradation including indiscriminate use of agrochemicals such as fertilizers and pesticides.